Robin Pepper

In Simi Linton’s “Reassigning Meaning”, she discusses the meaning of the word disability and takes apart the word to show the reader how it affects a person with disabilities. Linton says there are positives for the use of the word for medical purposes but many negatives because it bulks a widely different group into one category. Linton goes on to discuss the many other terms that could be used to describe persons with disabilities such as nice words like physically challenged or nasty words like crippled (226). Linton emphasizes there are many stereotypes that come with having disabilities, like saying the person is “suffering from” their disability but that kind of description needs to be more pointed and rephrased. Linton says in the beginning of the essay “Disability is a linchpin in a complex web of social ideals, institutional structures, and government policies” (224) in order to define disabilities as it is seen in her view of society. Linton’s article is telling the reader how to name a person with a disability, that they should be named the same way any other person should. It is obvious by the end the Linton feels that a person with disabilities are held to a different standard then what she would call “normal people”, but this situation needs to be re-addressed. Linton thinks disability needs to be redefined and uses this essay to say why there needs to be a new term other than disability.

Linton, Simi. “Reassigning Meaning.” *The Disabilities Studies*. Ed. Lennard J. Davis. Third ed. New York, NY: Routledge, 1997. 223-236. Print.